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Agriculture

There has been no noticeable change in the pattern of central and regional broadcasts on agricultural activities since the closing of the All-Union Party Congress in Moscow on 14 October. Farm labor organization and the livestock industry are still among the chief topics of discussion although the inadequate utilization and maintenance of mechanical equipment claim considerable attention. A report from Kurgan, RSFSR, (19 October) is critical of the continued lackadaisical attitude toward agricultural education in the special 3-year schools for farmers and stock-breeders. Although attention to this shortcoming has been called on several occasions before, says the report, the new educational year "is again beginning in an unsatisfactorily organized manner." In Katayskiy and Lebyazhevskiy rayons, for example, the seminars have been postponed time and again for no obvious reason. In Karagapolskiy rayon the agricultural students have not been provided with the necessary text books which, in fact, prejudices the entire training program. Such "utterly impermissible failures", it is pointed out, will not be tolerated much longer, and the Oblast Agricultural Propaganda Administration had better eliminate these educational drawbacks as soon as possible. ZAKARPATSKA PRAVDA admits inferentially (25 October) that the recent oblast agricultural exhibition could have been more successful if the collective farmers "had assimilated the advanced Michurinite science". Here, too, the Agricultural Propaganda Department is said to pay insufficient attention to the preparations for the agro-zootechnical courses and the dissemination of agricultural science in general. Only a short time remains before the schools open, says the editorial, but the Party, Soviet and agricultural organizations have done very little to prepare the farmers and schools for the new educational year.

Cotton-growing and fishing, the two major branches of Crimean agriculture, are, according to KRYMSKAYA PRAVDA (22 & 24 October), far below expectations. Both labor organization and mechanization on the cotton fields are still unsatisfactory. There are enough cotton-picking machines in the oblast ("more than 130") to double the tempo of work, but the inept utilization of the equipment is responsible for the sorry state of affairs. Another contributing factor is the "slackened labor discipline" in the collective farms which is the direct outcome of poor agricultural leadership. The above-mentioned "sorry state of affairs" is not amplified but the references to delays in cotton-picking and deliveries and the poor quality of the stuff in general appear to provide some explanation. In some unnamed rayons the equipment was found to be unsuitable for the work when the cotton-picking season began, and in others the leadership was too slow to realize the urgency of the work ahead. The top officials of Chernomorskiy, Razdolenskiy, Kirovskiy and other rayons as well as some oblast executives are said to be derelict in their duties, and are pointedly reminded that what Malenkov said at the recent Party Congress applies also to them:

The Party does not need hardened and indifferent officials who prefer their own tranquillity to the interests of the work, but does need selfless fighters...who place the interests of the State above all else.

The Crimea has been criticized before as one of the slow fishing areas of the USSR, and KRYMSKAYA PRAVDA (24 October) complains that the oblast fishing industry has so far shown no signs of improvement. The 1,000 fishing brigades scheduled to go to sea in the coming season, which are due to start out any day now, "are not yet ready." No further details are offered beyond a quotation from Mikoyan's unflattering reference to Crimean fishing which in itself should be sufficient to shake the oblast fishing industry out of its lethargy and stimulate greater production.

Discussing agriculture in the context of general economic activities, CHERNOMORSKA KOMUNA (25 October) declares that corn and sunflower harvesting in Odessa oblast is

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still far behind schedule. The paper is also somewhat skeptical about the "undertaking" of the oblast's state and collective farmers to complete "all agricultural work by 5 November. If the performance of Shiryatevskiy, Tsebrikovskiy and Ivanovskiy rayons is any criterion, however, the oblast "still has a long way to go" before its agricultural tasks are completed.

In an otherwise optimistic review of sugar production in the Ukraine, RADYANSKA UKRAINA (25 October) asserts that despite the great overall successes achieved by the industry since the end of the war, some lagging oblasts are still "taking cover" behind the successful ones. Indeed, in a number of sugar-beet areas the delivery of beets to State receiving points "is much slower than last year." Although sugar production on the whole is said to be the highest in the postwar years, the editorial remarks somewhat oddly that

there are reasons for supposing that this year too we shall have not less sugar but possibly even more than in 1951.

The mechanization of this branch of agriculture, the paper maintains, could be greatly improved if the available equipment were utilized to the full. But the indifferent handling of the agricultural machinery results in frequent breakdowns and involves a great deal of unnecessary manual labor in lifting the beets. What mismanagement has "accomplished" so far, the paper says, is "a great gap" between the amount of beets already dug and that delivered to the State. In Kamenets-Podolsk oblast it is 2.5 million centners, in Vinnitsa almost 3 million and in Kiev oblast almost 5 million centners. Sugar beet lifting, it is emphasized, is far ahead of deliveries not because this phase of the work is proceeding according to plan but because deliveries are "extremely slow" by comparison. The whole sugar beet business is said to be in a mess, since "nearly one-fourth of the beets have not yet been dug up". The shortage of trucks to transport the beets could be made good by the extensive employment of draft animals but the Ministry of Agriculture appears to "care very little" about that, and the result is the familiar "great loss" (velika shkoda) sustained by the State. This loss is further enhanced by the "anti-State practice" of the sugar industry representatives in the field who for some unaccountable reason have been rejecting large quantities of good beets by declaring them faulty. In addition to the three oblasts already mentioned, the following are reported to be doing a very poor job of beet harvesting: Poltava, Chernigov, Sumy, Zhitomir, Rovne, Kirovograd and Odessa.

A broadcast from Smolensk on 27 October states that the livestock industry was the major object of discussion and criticism at the recent oblast conference of the Soviet Executive Committee. The high death-rate of the young stock, the conference revealed, continues unchecked, and the productivity of all the other livestock remains pretty low. The conference, however, appeared to be more critical of what it referred to as squandering of livestock "on so-called internal economic requirements" (dlya tak nazyvayemykh khozaistvennykh nuzhd). This stricture is in keeping with the "State above all else" policy repeated ad infinitum on every occasion. Applied to this case, it simply means that meat products to be consumed by the farmers must come from the balance remaining after the prescribed meat deliveries to the State have been made. The slow increase in the number of cattle, in other words, could be speeded up to some extent if the collective farmers were to stick to their meat allotments rather than requirements which are presumably greater.

The "excessive" meat consumption by the farmers is said also to be responsible for the fact that in some rayons, notably Smolensk, Dukhovshchinsky and Safonov the number of head of cattle has been declining. Nor is that the only chronic shortcoming of the livestock industry that has been plaguing the officials. Inadequate and insufficient winter sheds for the stock have been the target of frequent official attacks before, and, as revealed by the Deputy Chairman of the oblast Executive Committee, that problem has not been licked yet. He did not pursue the theme, however,

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except to urge the conference to set 15 November as the final date when all the necessary preparations for stock wintering are to be completed.

RADYANSKA ZHITOMYRSHECHINA (24 October) reviews the overall agricultural situation in the oblast and finds it somewhat disappointing. The collective farms of the reclaimed marshland areas (polesye), it is claimed, are not doing as well as expected despite the "steady" flow of aid from the Party and Government. The agricultural output of a number of rayons--particularly Korostenskiy, Lugynskiy, Khorodnitskiy, Dovbyshskiy and Korotyshevskiy--is said to be far smaller than the land is capable of producing. Higher yields, it is suggested, can be obtained through an intensive liming of heavy soil with the simultaneous use of organic and mineral fertilizer. Mentioned in passing also is the low productivity of the oblast livestock.

A summarized version of a VELIKOLUJSKAYA PRAVDA review (26 October) speaks of the "serious situation" (seryoznoye polozenie) in the oblast's agriculture. Many collective farms have not even begun to harvest their overripe crops which "threaten to spoil the fields." The processing of long-fibre flax is referred to as lagging far behind the plan through the shortage of manpower and the failure of the agricultural officials to prepare permanent transportation brigades so that the delivery of the available flax to the State might be assured. The paper also urges the oblast officials to look into the qualitative aspect of flax production and "to take steps to combat waste."

A long PRAVDA article by the USSR Minister of Agriculture Benedictov broadcast on 27 October warns that only "a considerable upsurge in livestock breeding" (znachitelny podyom zhivotnovodstva) will make it possible to meet the growing demands for livestock produce. His thesis is that additional meat supplies will not be available so long as the demand is growing faster than the herds of stock, and a further increase in the number of communal livestock is still "the main task in the field of agriculture" (glavnaya zadacha v oblasti zemledelia). The root of all agricultural troubles, however, still lies in the inept utilization of technical equipment:

One can say without exaggeration that today everything depends on our ability to correctly use the great quantity of machinery, on our constant care for the mechanization of all labor-absorbing processes in agriculture.

Russian version:

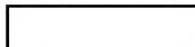
Mozhno bez preuvelenienia skazat chto teper vse zavist glavnym obrazom ot nashego umenia pravilno ispolzovat bogatyyu tekhniku, ot nashei postoyannoy zaboty o mekhanizatsii vsekh trudomikikh protsessov sel'skogo khozaistva.

Benedictov makes it clear that the "constant flow of machinery" to the collective farm fields has not materially improved the mechanization situation since a large part of the processing of individual crops is either done manually or at best is poorly mechanized. Included in this work is the harvesting and binding of straw as well as the cleansing, drying and loading of grain. The industrial adjunct of agriculture, farm-machine building, is according to the Minister just as guilty of the slow mechanization as are the agricultural officials. Up-to-date machines are designed "slowly" and just as slowly mastered and introduced into actual production.

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In a familiar exercise in self-criticism, Benedictov accuses his own ministry of falling down on the job of helping the collective farms to help themselves. Production tempos are often too slow because of the faulty labor policy pursued until recently by a number of oblasts, and it is the duty of the Ministry of Agriculture to forestall any deviation from the correct labor policy on the farms. As pointed out in a previous CFW report, the post war introduction of the "link" (zveno) system of agricultural labor proved a failure and the return to the old "production brigade" (proizvodstvennaya brigada) was subsequently decreed by the Party. The switch-over was painfully slow, however, and has been the object of renewed criticism since Malenkov's speech before the 19th Party Congress. Reflecting the prevailing Party line, and undoubtedly the true situation, Benedictov goes on to say that

one cannot fail to mention the great shortcomings existing even now in the organization of labor. In many farms the production brigades are not of permanent strength and have not been provided with production facilities, which lead to a 'depersonalization' of responsibility. Cases of weakening labor discipline have been noted.

Russian version:

nelzya ne otmetit, chto i nastoyashcheye vremya imeyutsya bolshie nedostatki v organizatsii truda. Na mnogikh kolkhozakh proizvodstvennie brigady ne imeyut postoyannogo sostava, za nimi ne prikrepleny sredstva proizvodstva, chto privodit k obezlichke. Imeyut mesto fakty oslableniya trudovoy distsipliny.

Agricultural statute violations are referred to in passing as still very much in evidence. They are in fact said to be sufficiently numerous to "cause serious damages to communal property" (nanozhat seryozniy ushcherb obshchestvennomu khozaistvu). Disparaging comment is made also on the indifferent attitude toward the propagation of the latest achievements of science in agriculture. (Omitted here, incidentally, is any criticism of the scientific bodies themselves, which are frequently accused of lack of cooperation with agriculture). This time it is the agricultural officials rather than the scientists and other experts who are not doing their share of the partnership, since many of the scientific achievements "are often completely ignored." An amusing example of administrative red tape in the Ministry of Agriculture is cited in the practice of issuing identical directives on all matters of agriculture to all rayons, collective farms and machine-tractor stations irrespective of their location or differing local conditions.

The result of the third quarter agricultural plan for the USSR (TASS, 27 October), while indicating better results than in 1951, is on the whole unspecific about actual attainments. With the exception of the already highly-publicized eight-billion-pud grain crop, facts and figures are familiarly omitted. The highest crop yields of grain are said to have been obtained in the Ukraine, North Caucasus and the Crimea. There is little reference to the recently-criticized low vegetable and potato crops beyond the remark that they were "larger than last year." A summarized ZVEZDA editorial (28 October) says that in "numerous" collective farms of the Belorussian Republic the harvest yields were bad, and that stock breeding is not progressing as it should. Instances of agricultural statute violations are said to be evident in Vitebsk, Molodechno and other oblasts. All these failings could have been remedied and been forestalled had the Party leadership on the oblast and rayon level exercised proper supervision of the agricultural organs. No further details are offered, however.

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Industry

Low labor productivity and high production costs are the two main targets of official attack in the otherwise meagre output on industrial activities. The so-called economy regime (rezhim ekonomi), as PRAVDA points out on 21 October, is to be one of the main features of the current Five Year Plan. Overhead expenditures must be drastically reduced in industry, agriculture and construction; labor efficiency must be raised still higher, at least another 50% by the end of the current Plan, and short-cuts to plan-fulfillment done away with. These short-cuts, the press and radio are at pains to explain, amount to plan-fulfillment on paper which often has little in common with actual performance. First, there is the deplorable tendency of industrial management to concentrate on the production of goods requiring simple operations and limited skill at the expense of more complicated items. This device appears to facilitate the quantitative fulfillment and even overfulfillment of the planned output quotas and thus make it possible to restrict the production of manufactures involving greater skill and precision. Secondly, the race for a quantitative showing inevitably leads to the production of inferior goods which have to be rejected and represent a total loss of labor and material.

SEVERNAYA PRAVDA (21 October) speaks of the "irregular" (neravnomernoye) production of the Kostroma oblast metal-processing plants, the textile and timber industries. Extensive idleness of machinery and low production quality, says the paper, are still plaguing the mentioned industries, and it is high time for the Party to do something about it. While the poor performance of these enterprises is, according to the paper, utterly inexcusable, the flax-processing industry is said to be lagging behind the plan for a very specific reason: "working conditions at the enterprises...have grown more difficult." The latter point is not amplified but, as has been frequently hinted in the past, it suggests decreasing labor efficiency through deteriorating material and welfare conditions.

The industrial workers of Rostov oblast, declares MOLOT editorially on 21 October, are still "not fully capable" of coping with the tasks required by the Communist Party. The shortcomings which have been hindering production all the time "have not yet been eliminated." Transportation and factory officials, the paper complains, seem to be reluctant to change to new and faster work methods that would materially improve industrial production. Many mines of the Rostov Coal Trust (Rostov-Ugol) are still unable to catch up with their production assignments. In the Bokov Coal Trust (Bokov-Ugol) only four out of the five mines have managed to keep up with the planned quotas. The editorial is highly critical of the deceptive "overall" output indices which, it says, enable the badly working enterprises "to live at the expense of the leading ones" (shit za schet peredovykh).

The same topic of "embellishing production indices" (priukrashivanie proizvodstvennykh pokazatelei) is discussed by PRAVDA on 24 October without mentioning any specific industrial units or officials. The elimination of the "formal attitude" (formalnoye otnoshenie) toward Party and Government decisions on the part of many industrial officials, it is claimed, would go a long way toward the elimination of the persisting production shortcomings. But Party discipline is still being disregarded by a certain number of (unnamed) Communist, Soviet and other officials who are not perturbed (ne bespokoyatsya) by the fact that "the interests of the country are jeopardized." We still have too many officials who assume that "they can do as they please" and that Party decisions and Soviet laws do not apply to them. The result is concealment of the truth about the real state of affairs:

It has also come to light showing that administrative officials, with the connivance of Party organizations, deliberately submit inflated requisitions for raw and other materials and padded output reports at a time when production plans actually remain incomplete.

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Russian version:

Izvestny takzhe fakty, kogda khozaistvenniki pri popustitelstve partiynykh organizatsiy predstavlyayut zavedomo zavyshennie zayavki na syryo i materialy, pri nevypolnenii proizvodstvennykh planov dopuskayut pripiski v otchetakh o vypuske produktov.

MOLOT pursues the production theme again on 24 October by declaring that "war must be declared" on bad management, squandering and all other malpractices which lead to wasting State funds and material resources. The Mikoyan plant alone is said to have shown a net loss of 200,000 rubles this year; but that is not the only factory where "enormous losses" (gromadnie poteri) are caused by the reckless expenditure of raw materials, fuel and electricity. Bad management is also held responsible for the great losses sustained by the North Caucasus Railroad, amounting to over 3 million rubles.

At least one broadcast makes the inferential admission that the would-be recruits for labor reserves are not always in a hurry to register. In a radio talk from Poltava (18 October) the deputy head of the Labor Reserves Department berates the oblast Executive Committee and its local branches for failing to attract the necessary number of recruits from among the youth. The extremely slow registration in a number of rayons, he says, is due to the lack of "explanatory work" (razyasnitelnaya rabota) designed to stimulate the youths' enthusiasm for training and work. These youths must be given a description of "the life and work" of metal workers and miners and the State's solicitude for their welfare. They must also be promised "cultural services" (kulturnoe obsluzhivanie) at the Poltava and Kremenchug gathering centers (sbornie punkty) before they are shipped off to their training destination.

Miscellaneous

Malaria, says Morozov in a Home Service talk on 21 October, "has almost been liquidated" in the USSR with the aid of acritsin, which is far superior to quinine, hitherto considered the most effective remedy against the disease. Among other medical remedies said to have been evolved by Soviet scientists are "Gordeyev liquid" (zhidkost gordeyeva) for the treatment of swelling in ulcerous skin diseases, and Ribitsin used against blood disorders and disorders of the lymphatic glands.

A TASS transmission for Europe on 26 October quotes a Lisenkov TRUD article commemorating the 30th anniversary of the liberation of the Soviet Far East from the "Anglo-American-Japanese interventionists." The damages caused to the USSR by the "sojourn of the Americans", as expressed in the enormous quantities of "stolen" gold, coal, timber, furs and factory equipment, is said to amount to 225 million rubles in gold.

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